

# Moving towards bilingual education in Mali:



bridging policy and practice for...

improved reading instruction



# Credits and Thanks



➤ At the Ministry of Education, Literacy, and National Languages (MEALN) in Mali:

- The Planning and Statistics Unit (CPS)
- The Unit for Support to Decentralisation (CADDE)
- The Directorates of Pedagogy (DNP)
- The Directorate of Basic Education (DNEF)

➤ Colleagues deserving special mention:

- M. Abou DIARRA (MEALN/CADDE)
- Dr. Youssouf M. HAIDARA (USAID/PHARE)
- Aude Vescovo DIARRA (USAID/PHARE)

# Plurilingual Instruction in Mali

- Highly favorable policy environment:
  - 1979- 1st schools teaching in national language
  - 1987- «Pédagogie convergente»
  - 1999- Bilingual instruction in 13 languages
  - By 2005- Bilingual instruction introduced in 2550 public schools
- In 2009-2010, **all** Malian schools *should have* been offering bilingual instruction.





# Study Objectives



- Establish a linguistic mapping for the administrative region of Mopti
- Examine the material available for teaching the bilingual curriculum
- Determine whether the teachers in that region were trained/prepared to teach the bilingual curriculum
- Determine whether the teacher training institutes in those regions were able to prepare teachers to teach in national languages
- Evaluate the degree of implementation of the bilingual curriculum in the schools
- Develop recommendations to better support that implementation

# Assumptions Brought into Question

- Languages map with precision to a certain geographic area of a country.
- It is important for the system to tailor instruction to a child's *mother* tongue.
- A system can not (or should not) offer bilingual instruction until sufficient resources exist in all languages concerned.
- If a school is listed in our database as teaching in a given language, then it is teaching in that language.
- If a teacher speaks a language, he/she is confident that he/she can teach that language.
- Adults are the best source of information about languages spoken or used by children.





# Concepts and Definitions Explored

## ➤ Majority Language and Language in Common

- A majority language is the language spoken by the majority of the members of a group.
- A common language is a language that children of different ethnic groups use together to communicate.

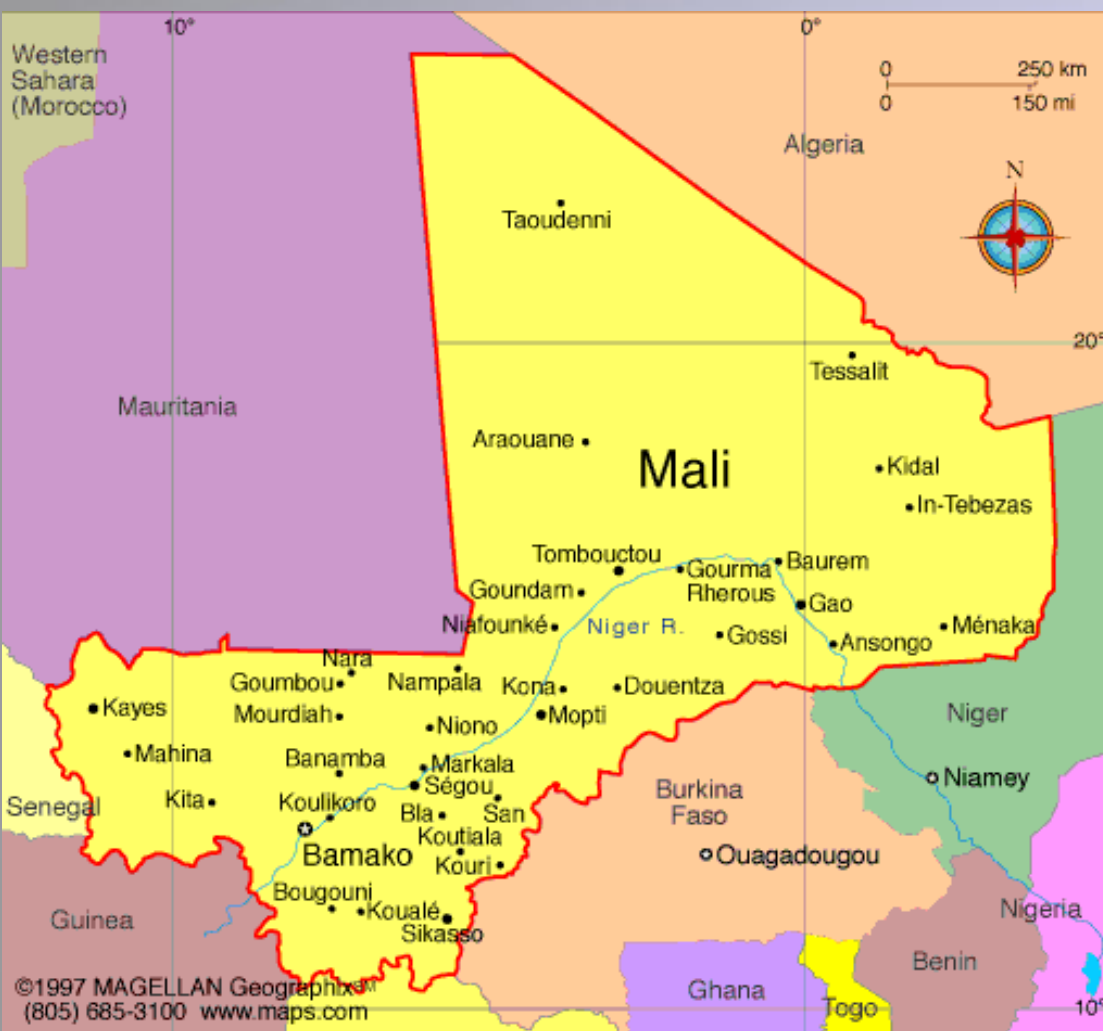
## ➤ Teachers' mother tongue and language best spoken by that teacher

## ➤ Teaching in national language and instruction of the national language



# Study Sample and Implementation

- The administrative region of Mopti
- 12 teams active for 3 weeks (\$25 thousand)
- 949 schools (96% of targeted schools)
- 97% of these schools were geo-referenced
- 949 focus groups with primary school students
- 2846 teachers (out of 3287, or 87%)
- 2 teacher training colleges (IFM), one in Koro, the other in Sevaré
- 10 teacher training professors, 333 student teachers



# LINGUISTIC DEMAND IN THE SCHOOLS OF MOPTI



## Mapping language Use in the Region

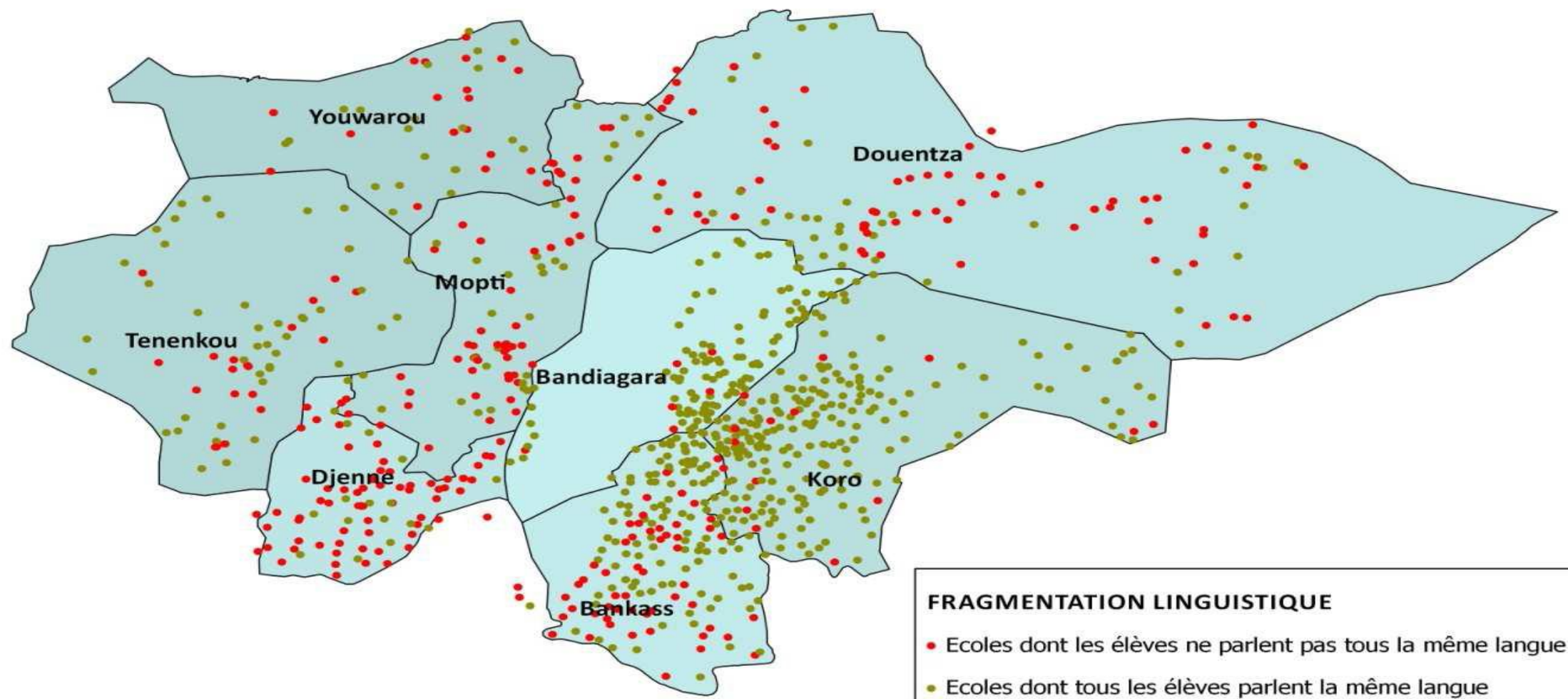


# Linguistic Demand in the Mopti Region



- In 68% of the region's schools, the children speak the same language (592 of 869 schools for which student linguistic data was available).
- In these **homogeneous** schools, determining the language of instruction is not a problem.
- In the other schools, **heterogeneous** schools, the language the children use **in common** should be the language of instruction.

# Homogeneous (592) and Heterogeneous (277)



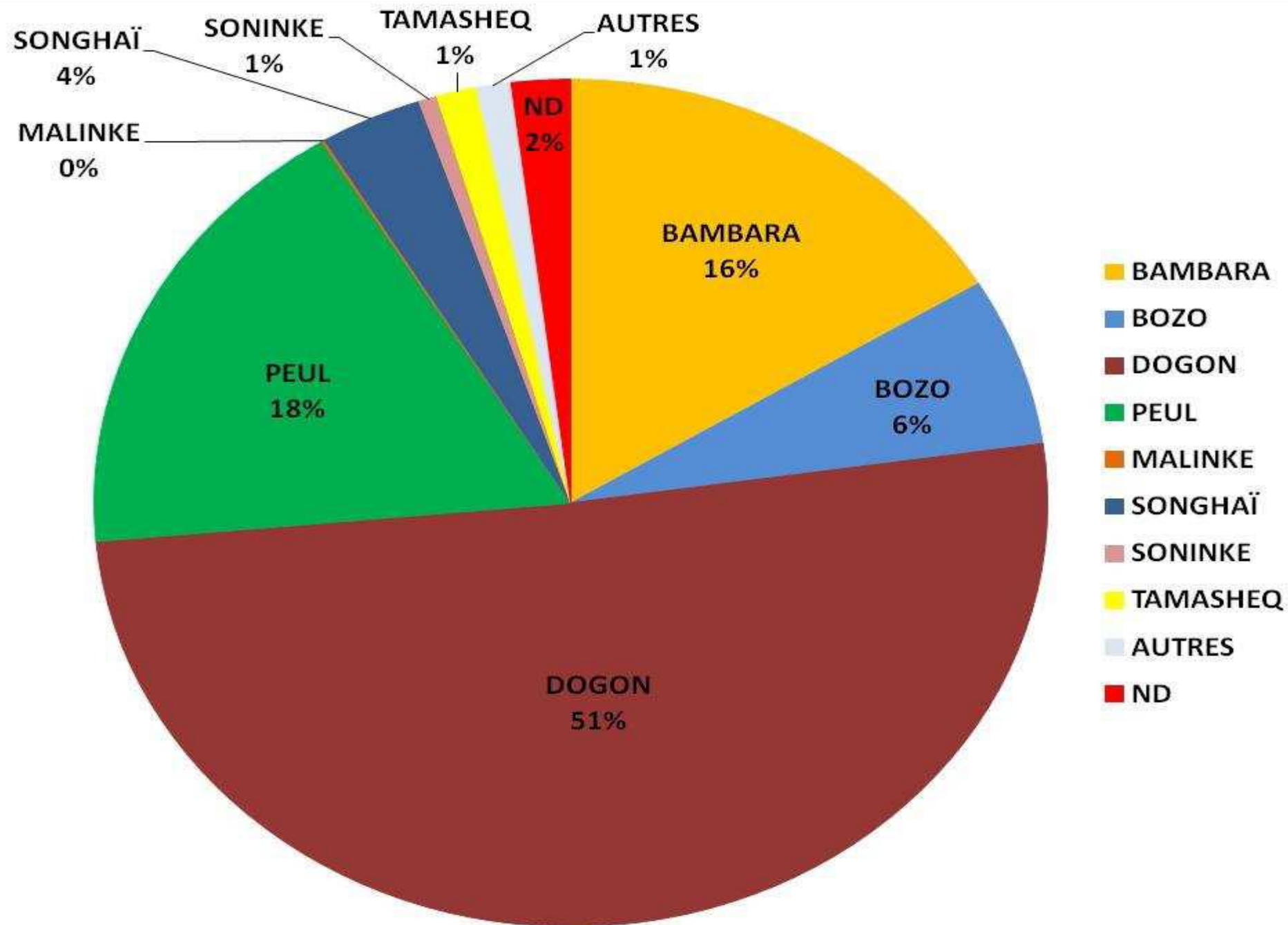


# Choosing the Language of Instruction

- This study had four sources of information for determining students' common language:
  - All languages spoken by the students
  - The directors' input on his/her students' language in common
  - The teachers' input on his/her language in common
  - The information from the focus groups with the students
- In 95% of the cases, the different sources of data are coherent
- In 3% of the cases, they are not; in this scenario, the focus group data is selected
- In 2% of the cases the common language values were missing (ND)



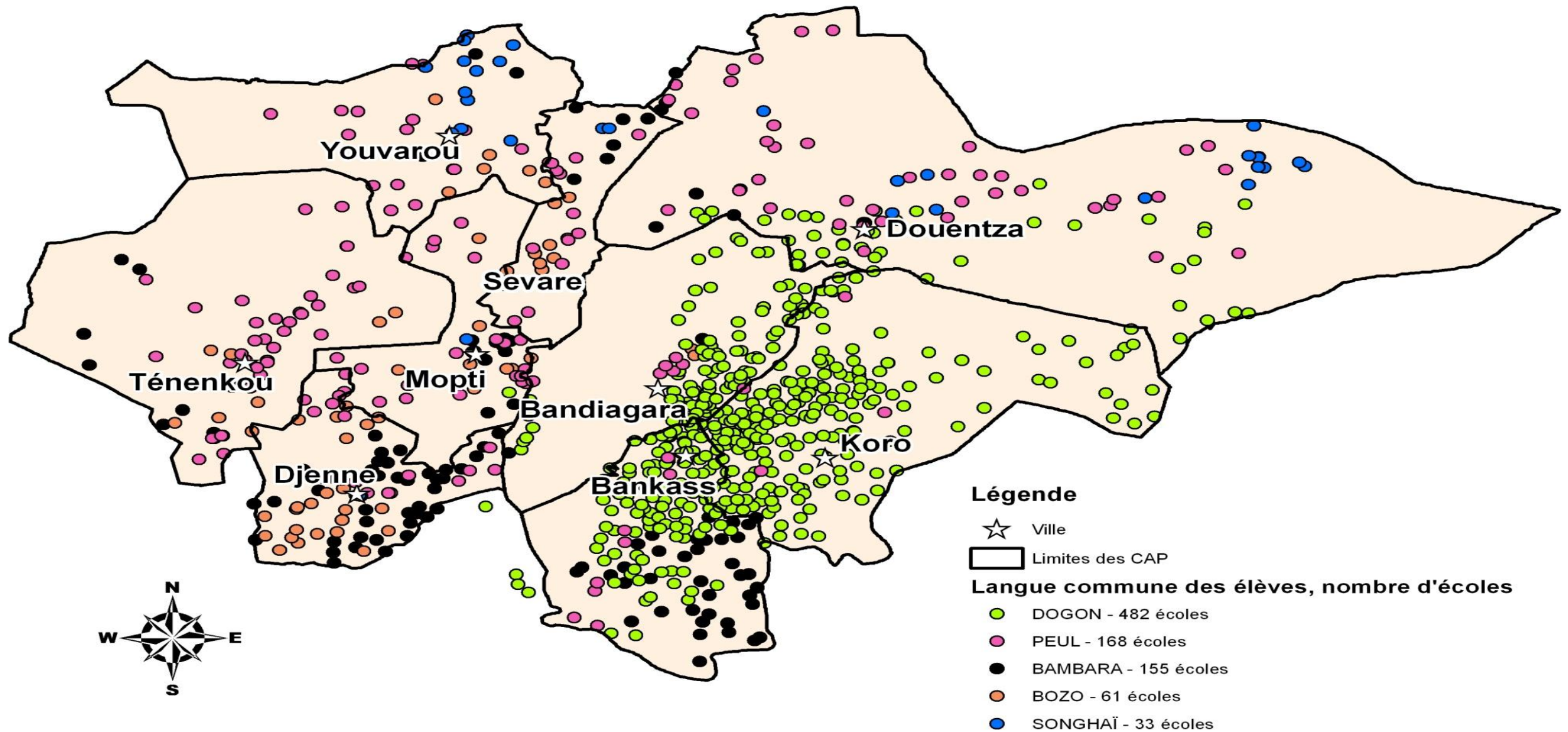
# Common Language-All Schools (949)





# Common Language Mapping

Langue commune utilisée dans les écoles de la Région de Mopti



Produit par USAID/Mali  
Juin - 2011

# Summarizing Language Demand in the Mopti Region

- For the entire region, **4 languages enable the ministry to teach the bilingual curriculum in over 90% of the schools: Dogon, Peul, Bambara and Bozo.**
- How can the roles of decentralized structures and centralized ministry offices be brought into balance to meet language demand in a region such as Mopti?



# THE SUPPLY SIDE OF THE EQUATION



Studying in National Languages in the Mopti Region



# Curriculum Schools in 2010



228 of the 949 schools surveyed were actually teaching in national language, according to the information provided by their directors.

This is only 24% of the schools in the region.



# Matching Demand to Supply: Curriculum

- 91% of the 228 écoles teaching in national language were teaching in the language identified as the *language in common*.
- The 9% of schools where this was not the case encompassed all of the major groups (Dogon, Peul, Bambara, Bozo, Songhai).
- National language instruction was found ***in grades one through six*** in only 37% of curriculum schools where the common language was the language of instruction.
- Data from directors (official information) and teachers was not always coherent: according to teacher data, 24% of the schools where the common language was the stated language of instruction **were not offering a single national language class.**



# Matching Demand to Supply: Bilingual Teaching Materials

- Schools had access to some national language materials.
- According to data collected, which was somewhat problematic:
  - On average, schools possessed 102 to 150 manuals in national languages, for all subjects and class levels;
  - The levels with the fewest materials were levels 2 and 3;
  - If it is considered that schools not having responded to the questions on manuals do not possess any, a manual is shared, on average, by 2,1 students.





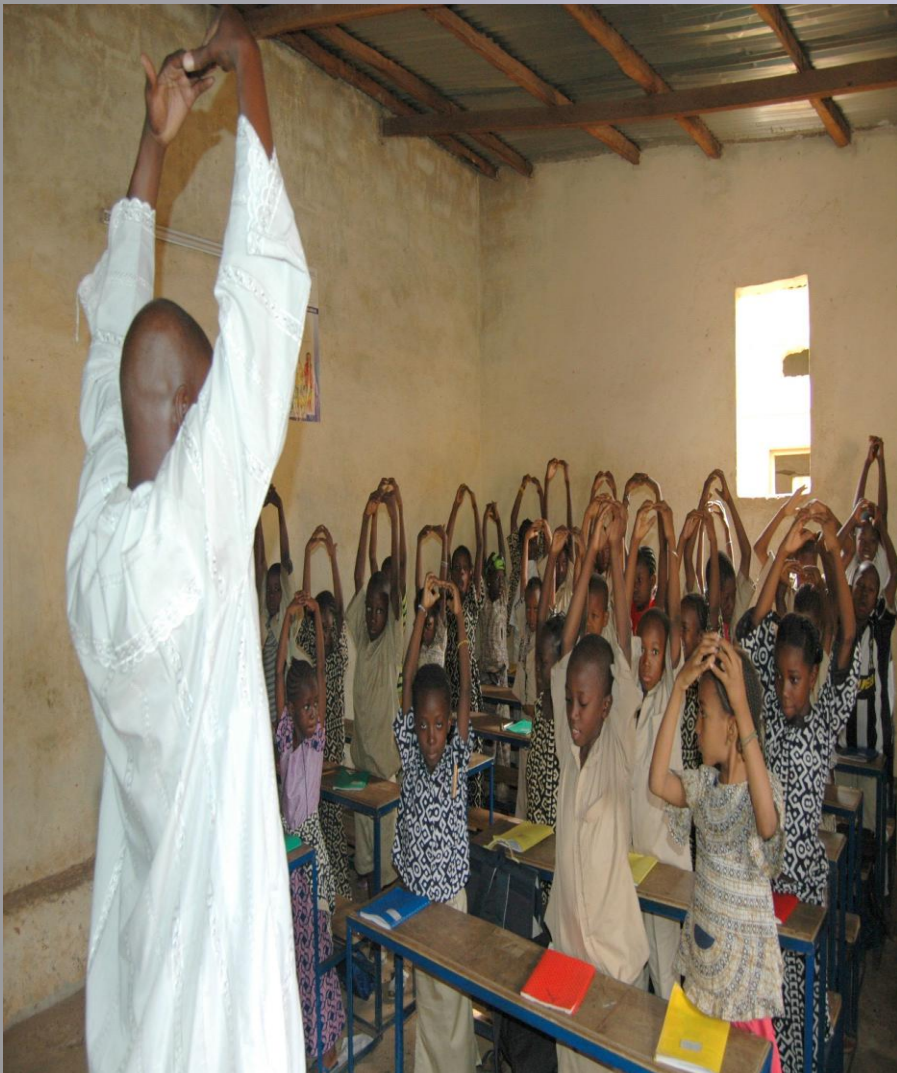
# Matching Demand to Supply: Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

- 2 teacher training colleges surveyed
- Neither had enough teacher training college professors competent to teach in national languages.
- Only Bambara was taught in the Sevare IFM, although the most prevalent language in common in the schools in the Mopti education districts is Peul.
- Only 1 to 2 hours a week were accorded in each institute to preparing prospective teachers to work in national languages in their classrooms.



# Matching Demand to Supply: In-Service Teacher Preparation

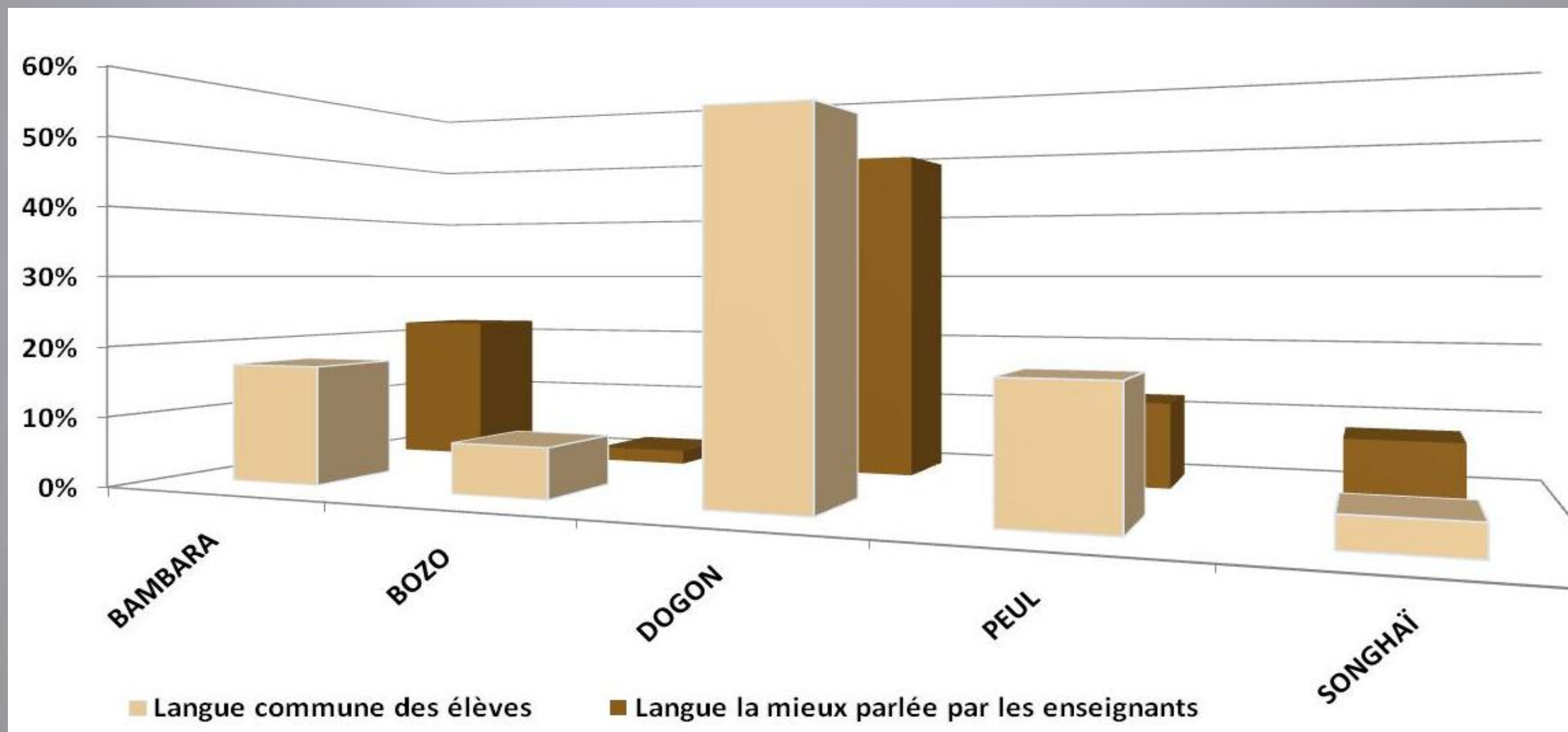
- 81% of teachers using the bilingual curriculum were trained to teach in the «language in common » of their school.
- Just 52,4% were trained to teach both in the target common language *and at the level at which they were teaching.*
- 19% of teachers in bilingual classrooms had **no training** for teaching in any national language.





# Matching Demand to Supply: Teacher Preparation

- 64% of teachers working in national language said that the target national language in their school was the one they spoke the best.



# Matching Demand to Supply: The Bottom Line

➤ We examined the «match » between demand and supply in relation to:

- the program of study of each of the schools surveyed
- availability of materials in national languages
- the fit between the language of instruction and the language in common of the students
- the effective use of the bilingual curriculum in the schools
- teachers' competencies in national languages
- teachers' preparation for teaching in national languages



**1% of the 945 schools** in the region can be said to offer: bilingual instruction in the most appropriate language for their student population and according to the curriculum from grades one to six, taught by a teacher trained and prepared for this task.



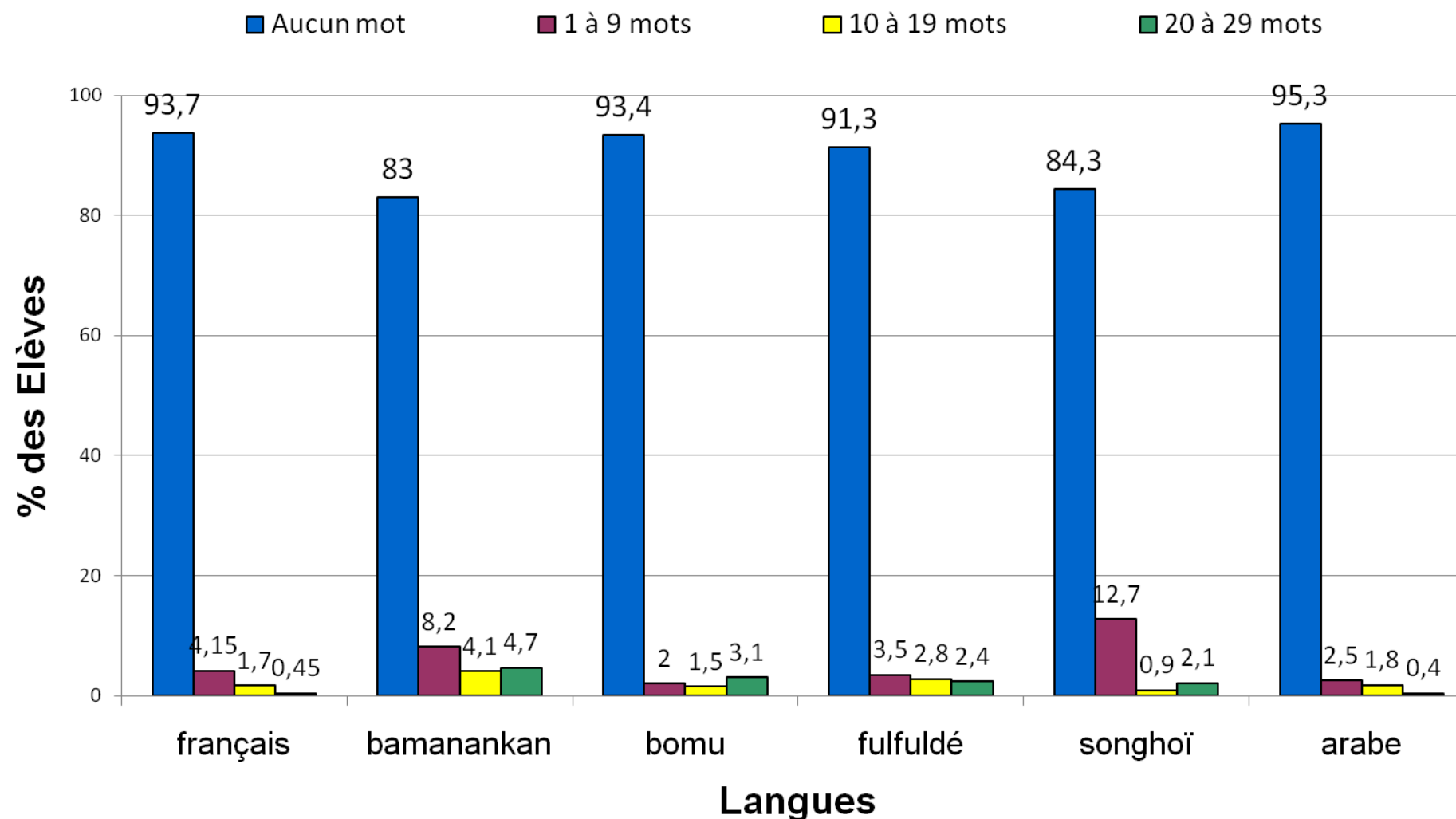
# MEALN Conclusions about Supply and Demand



- In Mali, demand far outstrips the supply of bilingual instruction founded on solid teacher professional development programs and availability of materials.
- In other words, the implementation of the bilingual curriculum has been partial at best.
- The lack of attention to teacher preparation is a main cause of this demand-supply imbalance.

# Which Brings Us Back to Reading and Writing...

**More than 83% of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders tested in a national EGRA sample in 2009 in six languages were unable to read a single word, in any language**





# Selected Study Recommendations

- Choose the language in common as a language of instruction in a bilingual school.
- Integrate data collection on the «language in common » in the annual statistics and planning exercises undertaken by the CPS.
- Use GPS data for school language mapping across the entire nation of Mali.
- Create pre-service programs tailored to facilitate bilingual instruction.
- Match the linguistic abilities of IFM professors and prospective and current teachers to the language needs revealed through the school mapping.
- Conduct regular updates of the degree of implementation of the bilingual curriculum.



# Assumptions and Insights for the Mali Team

ASSUMPTION	INSIGHT
Languages map with precision to a certain geographic area of a country.	Not always. Visit the school in person.
It is important for the system to tailor instruction to a child's <i>mother</i> tongue.	Untrue and sometimes impossible.
A system can not (or should not) offer bilingual instruction until sufficient resources exist in all languages concerned.	Untrue. In most areas, a few languages will distinguish themselves as frequently used common languages.
If our school is listed in a database as teaching in a given language, then we are teaching in that language.	Untrue. What a school is listed as doing on paper and what it is doing in practice may not at all be similar.
If a teacher speaks a language, he/she is confident that he/she can teach that language.	Untrue.
Adults are the best source of information about languages spoken or used by children.	Not always. Discrepancies in almost 10% of the schools.



# Thoughts to Inform Future Practice

Adopting a « language in common» perspective and a demand-supply framework while conducting on-site language mapping can help a ministry and its donors:

- Identify high density languages for short-term, intensive resource allocation;
- Demystify and de-intensify the debates about language supremacy *within the context of the school system*;
- Validate children's inherent linguistic abilities, which are never limited to only one language;
- Provide the systemic focus needed to address cross-language challenges in preparing teachers and creating materials for improved reading and writing instruction.

# Aw Initié !

*Learning transforms lives.  
EDC transforms learning.*

## Nous vous remercions !

